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# Conventicle of Rolle







# CONVENTICLE OF ROLLE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF THE  
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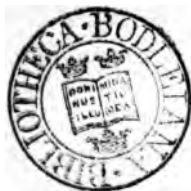
CÆSAR MALAN, D.D.,  
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL, GENEVA.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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I **MAKE** no apology for writing these few lines of introduction to a little book of the late Rev. Dr Malan's, which I think it may be useful to republish at the present time. A letter from him, dated 1826, contains in its conclusion the following paragraph:—"The Lord can bless ~~the~~ truth, however briefly it may be expounded. You may make what use you judge right of what I have written. I will publish it myself if necessary for edification, for what have I in view but the advancement of the reign of the Lord in the hearts of His beloved people?"



My first intention was to translate this letter, but on reading it over, I saw it was not so plain and simple an exposition of his doctrinal views as was presented in a book, entitled, the "Conventicle of Rolle;" and as a most interesting letter, the latter half of which I quoted in reference to Malan's death, contains the following sentence, "If you wish for a complete view of his doctrine, you will find it in a little book called the 'Conventicle of Rolle,'" I preferred the publication of that work. I rejoice that I did so, as I have obtained leave to prefix the whole of the letter in question, which presents, perhaps, the best practical illustration of the use of Malan's ministry. I would confine myself to its prominent feature—the clear and positive way in which the gospel was set forth as the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ, and *which ought to be received on the testimony of the Word of God, and to bring peace,*

and comfort, and joy, to the heart of the faithful hearer of that Word. He was often accused of speaking too abruptly on these points; but such is our natural indifference to these things, and to our going deeply into the subject in reference to ourselves, that we need to be aroused from our sleep, and Scripture is full of such abrupt and startling questions.

With him religion was a reality: you always found him at home on this subject; and his great desire was, that you should receive the whole truth of the gospel, and be able to regard God as your reconciled God and Father, and live in the comfort of being His child, and of having the promise of His Holy Spirit. The gospel is, in fact, something to be received, and then it can be preached to others. "Whose I am, and whom I serve" should be the position of every Christian. And, indeed, it has become necessary in the present day, when the

Church seems called to face a new epoch of opposition and of trial, that we should, as individuals, know and judge ourselves, and seriously ascertain what is our true position before God. There may be the clearest comprehension of sound doctrine without our having actually received it. It has been lately well said, "It is not as nations, no, nor as churches, but as individuals, that we must stand in the judgment. It is not as nations, no, nor as churches,—corporate life won't do,—but as individuals, that we must have fellowship with God."

It is the indistinct way of viewing the privilege of communion with God, and the awful contrast of the opposite state that seems much overlooked in the present day. We have too much the habit of carelessly reading the Word of God ; and there cannot be a surer proof of this than the difficulty which is often felt in owning the gracious doctrine of our being children of God,

through Jesus Christ,—a doctrine which we acknowledge every day in the use of the Lord's prayer. A very fertile source of error is also to be found in our attributing a wrong meaning to words. Many will not object to say they *hope* that they are possessors of these blessed privileges of the gospel, forgetting that they are to be received by *faith*, and that *hope* has regard to the future. In Scripture, the distinction between faith and infidelity is marked by very striking contrasts,—light and darkness, life and death, &c. In our Lord's time we see no charitable handling of the sins of the Pharisee, or of the Sadducee, and these two are the great divisions of the enemy at the present day. The Pharisee has sought his rest in Puseyism, and the Sadducee goes a step further, and attempts to find a gospel suited to the spirit of the age everywhere. But I hasten to let Malan speak for himself, and will only prefix the

letter which so truly describes the result of his visit to a large family.

J. E.

“I have been wishing much to write to you that I might tell you how differently I think of M. Malan from what I did when I last wrote. I did not then understand him, nor the principle on which he proceeded, and therefore thought him presumptuous, and taking too much upon him. Now I see he was right in what he said; and he has so completely convicted me of the want of life in my own religion, and been the means of making me *drink* of that fountain of living water from which alone it can proceed, that I cannot feel thankful enough for his visit. His view of *faith*, that powerful principle, is much more simple than any I ever heard given of it before; but the more I have considered and experienced it, the more scriptural and satisfactory I

have found it. The first confession he requires of every one is, whether they believe that Jesus is *the Christ*—that is, the appointed way of reconciliation to God the Father, which is salvation. Now, this profession every professing Christian is ready to make ; but when he next desires them to believe that they are then children of God, and heirs of eternal life, Christ being the *free* gift of the Father which is received upon believing, they are then apt to hesitate as to the full acknowledgment that they are children of God, and that eternal life is certainly theirs ; and none that I have heard could ever at once answer him that they were in perfect peace with regard to their state with God, so that it would be happiness to them to die at any moment. He then says, Ah ! you have not true faith, for you do not then believe the testimony of God—that *whosoever* believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God, (1 John v. i.)

a very favourite text with him, or that he that believeth *hath* eternal life, and shall never come into condemnation. You do not receive the witness of God, but make Him a liar, because you do not believe the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. Now, this is not like Abraham, who simply depended on God's Word, and was ready to offer up his son, for if you did truly believe what God says, you would have peace, perfect peace, in believing; for by two immutable things God has confirmed His counsel, that we might have strong consolation, &c., &c. Much to this purpose he brings forward; so that any one is obliged to confess, that instead of its being humility to speak doubtfully of one's state, and to *hope only* that one is a child of God, and shall attain to everlasting life, when professing to believe in Christ, is, in fact, presumptuously doubting the Word of God; and till this point

is clearly ascertained, he will not go a step further, not considering that any one has entered into the life of faith, till full peace and confidence is established on this foundation, which, as it rests entirely on the Word of God, and has no reference to our frames and feelings, nothing can shake ; for though, when in the enjoyment of sensible communion with God, we rejoice more, and feel grateful for it as a gift, yet, when deprived of it, we are equally sure that we are His children, and must never admit of a doubt on that subject ; ‘ that is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith ;’ for how should we take unto us the whole armour of God, unless we are sure to whom we belong—how would a soldier act in the day of battle, as M. Malan said in one of his sermons, if he were not sure to which king or country he belonged ? His indecision would make him yield more easily to the enemy. And then, alluding to people who call this



confidence presumptuous, he said, 'Would soldiers think it presumptuous to glory in their king? Is there such a thing as boasting when you tell of free grace?' &c., &c.

"There is much in his clear statement that reminded me of Mr —, but with this essential difference, that he makes a closer personal application of it, and will not be satisfied till he makes one say, 'I do believe in my heart that Jesus is the Christ, and therefore, because God says it, I am His child, and eternal life is mine;' and when one is really enabled by the Holy Spirit (whose work it is) to say this from the heart, it immediately spreads a peace and a joy over the mind, that was unknown before; and all that had been a sort of confused mass of faith and evidences, and consequent peace, &c., &c.; for really it was so complex, it was hardly possible to say what faith was, or who had attained a high enough measure to rejoice with joy unspeak-

able, and full of glory. All this is at once cleared, and everything put in its right place, by setting out with the entire confidence, that peace with God is made for ever, and that I can never be otherwise than His child. I then feel myself set at liberty, and my soul more intimately united to Christ than I before had any idea of, and instead of serving in bondage like a servant, as I now see I did, when I thought my state with God depended on my walk, I feel all the freedom of a child whose delight it is to serve a loving Father, and constantly to feel that I am in His presence, and that however weak and feeble in myself, He will direct and guide me, as I belong to Him ; and this insures my sanctification, as it is the only road that leads to heaven, where my heart and all its affections are placed ; now that I know that it is *my* country, and God *my* Father in Christ Jesus.

"Now, though I have particularised my own case, it is not me alone, but all of us at home, that have been led to see the cause of that want of life, with so much knowledge, and some light, that we have so long lamented. It was the baptism of the Spirit which was wanting to reveal to us the full hope of our calling, and to seal us after we had believed; and I can assure you it has made a delightful, and I think, a visible change.

"If you wish for a complete view of his doctrine, you will find it in a little book called the 'Conventicle of Rolle,' written by him."

## CONVENTICLE OF ROLLE.

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THE meeting was not numerous, but select. About twenty persons in different stations were assembled in the house of one of the most noble families in the country. All had the same object,—that of conversing about our most holy religion ; all had the same desire,—that of listening to the exhortations of a minister belonging to the Church of Geneva, who was paying them a visit.

After the usual salutations the conversation became general. The blessing which God bestows on a nation, in raising up faithful ministers of the Word, was the topic on which they conversed. One town in Switzerland was particularly mentioned,

which appeared in this respect to be eminently distinguished by the Lord. "Do you not think," said one of the company to the Genevese minister, "that it possesses several Christian ministers?"

*The Genevese Minister.* "I am of opinion, my dear friends, that we ought to be very cautious in judging of another's faith. You are aware that it is the prerogative of Him who searches the heart, to be fully acquainted with what passes within; and in no part of Scripture do we find this privilege transferred to man. I therefore feel some hesitation in answering the question. I sincerely trust, that everywhere, and particularly in Switzerland, there are many faithful ministers."

—— "However, Sir, it is easy to know the tree by its fruits; and it is thus that the Lord teaches us to distinguish between true and false prophets."

*Gen. Min.* "I grant that we ought to

try the spirits, that we may not be led away by falsehood ; and I cannot but condemn, I should rather say, lament, the credulity of those who, neglecting to bring to the standard of the Word of God what they hear from the pulpit, suppose they have listened to this Word, because they have heard a *sermon*. But observe, that to make such an examination, deliberately and charitably, for one's self, in order to follow our own conviction, is widely different from attempting to do it for another ; and we ought not to denounce a minister because we are not altogether satisfied with his preaching, or because his conduct is not adorned by that sanctity which is so essential."

— "Certainly, Sir ; but if a minister advances in the pulpit doctrine which is at variance with the truth of the gospel, ought we to hesitate in viewing him as a worldly man, and not a minister of Christ?"

*Gen. Min.* "The Holy Spirit has de-

cided this question, when it declared by the mouth of St Paul:—If any one preach another gospel, meaning false doctrine under the name of the gospel, were it St Paul himself, or an angel from heaven, let him be accursed; that is to say, let him be looked on as a liar exposed to the divine displeasure. In regard to this, there cannot be a doubt. What is not the gospel is falsehood; and he who preaches not the former, must incur the penalty of propagating the latter, in whatever manner he does it, whether simply as a preacher, or as professor or principal of an academy. But I entreat you, mark the difference between not preaching the gospel, and doing so in a weak, confused, and doubtful manner. The same measure of faith is not given to all; all are not equally initiated into the mysteries of the faith; and unfortunately many, although truly sincere, have not an extensive knowledge of the Word of Life,

because they do not study it with attention. It is not uncommon to meet with ministers and pastors, whose private conversation is extremely pious and edifying, and whose domestic life is adorned with the fruits of righteousness, whilst their public discourses are obscure, ambiguous, and so deficient in spiritual unction, that one would be disposed to regard them as the flimsy declamations of an orator, rather than the sermons of a minister of Christ addressed to persons on the brink of destruction."

—— "Then, Sir, what is to be done? Ought we to sacrifice the soul by feeding it with this unwholesome food, or the minister by removing him from his pulpit?"

*Gen. Min.* "In such circumstances, I would advise you to seek edification in the private conversation of this Christian, who is prevented from fully preaching the gospel, either by imperfect and erroneous views, which perhaps you may correct, or by timi-



dity arising from the fear of man or the trammels of custom; but beware of denying him the name of a Christian because he does not possess the energy of St Peter or the unction of St John. Consider, my dear friends, that our Master has bestowed different gifts, nor does he always give the same gift in an equal degree. A man's talents may be adapted for exhortation, whilst he is not qualified for prophesying, or, in other words, for preaching. Although he does not possess the brightness of the eye, or the beauty of the mouth, yet, if he belongs to the foot, is he not equally a member of the body? Would it not be wrong to assert, that the soldier who guards the baggage, does not form a part of the army, because he is not found amongst the foremost ranks? In like manner the servant of Christ, who is employed in a remote corner of the farm, *in the meanest occupations*, belongs to the *number of the heavenly Father's workmen*,

and performs services as important, although he is not engaged, like some of his more robust and active fellow-labourers, in holding the plough, or in keeping watch by night, and protecting the flock from the wolves."

—— "But, Sir, you are said to be bigoted."

*Gen. Min.* "God forbid that I should act so contrary to His will, and that I should thus deprive myself of the pleasure of labouring along with my fellow-servants, whether strong or weak,—in the same field,—in the blessed Church of our Lord. Besides, should I not thus expose myself to deserved retaliation, and draw upon my own ministry the same censure which I had cast on that of others?"

—— "You must, however, set some bounds to this forbearance; you cannot extend it indiscriminately to all who receive the appellation of ministers?"

*Gen. Min.* "The only limits which I

prescribe, are those with which the apostle surrounds the churches of Galatia, Ephesus, and Crete. I endeavour to ascertain the solidity of the foundation which a minister lays. If it is Christ, and Christ crucified for guilty sinners, I recognise the operation of the Spirit of Truth in his mind, and hold out to him the right hand of fellowship. If I afterwards see him build upon this foundation hay or stubble, I pray the Master to strengthen, to instruct His servant ; and I endeavour to be useful to him so far as I am able. If, on the other hand, the minister lays a different foundation ; if he teaches that man can be justified by his own works, or that it is necessary to render one's self worthy to be received by Christ,—I have then no hesitation in regarding him as a minister of the world, a liar, a true Jewish teacher who wishes to introduce circumcision, and all the other works of the law. In such a man I repose

no confidence ; I separate myself from him in conformity to the express injunction of the apostle, and call upon others to shun him with greater care than they would the most contagious disease. But I must previously have heard him avow his heresy. I should be most careful not to judge by appearances, or merely by inference. In such a case, I again repeat, one cannot be too cautious."

One of the ladies asked a question respecting the forbearance which should be extended towards all men. She inquired whether a believer can give the name of Christians to all those who assume the appellation ; if it is not necessary habitually to keep up the distinction between the world and the children of God.

*Gen. Min.* "It appears to me, Madam, that this distinction is indispensable in the mind of the believer, because it is the result of this truth, 'That if a man is not

born again by the Spirit of God, he is still of the world, and does not belong to the Church of Christ.' But, in the application of this distinction to the different members of the visible Church, I cannot sufficiently enforce charity on every one who, feeling in his own experience that faith respects God and not man, also knows that it may continue long in the ground without producing a plant strong enough to overtop the weeds and thorns of our former sinful habits. When we wish to speak of Christians, in the proper sense of the word, I think we ought to define the term; thus we should say, for instance,—the number of faithful Christians, of the children of God, increases in the midst of us. But when we are called upon to express our sentiments in regard to the character of an individual, we should remember that God will render to every one what is his due, and content ourselves with giving a very

modest decision, in such terms as these:—  
I trust that such a person is a child of God; or, I fear he does not yet know Christ as He ought to be known.”

—— “You are, then, of opinion, Sir, that we ought not to limit out religious connexions to those friends who hold the same sentiments, and exclude others who do not see things in the same light?”

*Gen. Min.* “Beware of falling into so dangerous an error. By allowing yourself to be so narrow-minded, you would very soon become a schismatic, if I may use the expression, or a sectarian; and if you thus permit yourself to be wedded to your own opinion, you will not be long of forming a Church, exclusively for yourself; unite yourself closely to as many persons as possible who fear God, make them acquainted with your faith and your obedience to the Saviour; endeavour to enlighten, to strengthen them, if they are ignorant or weak;

and do not separate from them ; or rather do not give up seeing them, until they no longer wish for your visits or your company. Follow the footsteps of our Saviour; He was rejected. The 'Friend of sinners' was not the first to turn away from them."

*A Minister of the Pays de Vaud.* "I am delighted with your advice, dear brother. What consolation it affords! How it destroys all those party and acrimonious feelings which the devil endeavours to make us entertain towards one another. Yes, I plainly see that we must cordially receive our poor brethren, without inquiring what livery they wear ; and if they refuse to accept of our friendship, we must pray for them in secret."

*Gen. Min.* "Such are my sentiments, my dear brother ; and it is on this account that I experience so much peace, so great joy upon the present occasion. I am con-

vinced, that were we, by the blessing of God, both in public and private, successfully to enforce this excellent doctrine of Christian love and forbearance, we should gain over to the Lord a number of souls. Satan cannot be more completely baffled, than when, instead of taking his advice, which would lead us to hate a person on account of his errors, we reply, "Well, I will go to him and endeavour to convince him, by arguments of love." The prince of this world can employ neither force nor cunning against the tears of love. Let us, my dear friends, love souls; let us love them as creatures formed for eternity, and then we shall hesitate before pronouncing upon them the sentence of death. We shall rather present to them the promises of the gospel ten times, nay, a hundred times, than give way, in a solitary instance, to carnal pride and irritation at their rejection of the truth."



Upon this, one of the ministers of the Pays de Vaud rose and embraced the minister of Geneva. This feeling demonstration of love seemed to affect the whole company.

*Gen. Min.* "Dear brother, blessed be the Lord who permits us to be united in His love. My friends, we have a token that His Spirit is in the midst of us, since our hearts are filled with charity. Judge for yourselves: Behold what peace, what true happiness, are produced by sentiments of long-suffering and forbearance towards our fellow-pilgrims. This is the blessedness of the communion of saints, the delightful foretaste of the felicity of that kingdom where we shall for ever enjoy the society of our gracious God and Saviour." \*

\* The following four or five pages, referring to the communion of saints, are omitted, as they would not be clearly understood without the help of a plate which accompanied the first edition of this work.

"But, Sir," asked an aged man, "what line of conduct ought we to pursue, should our meetings be prohibited by the civil power?"

*Gen. Min.* "All that we could do, Sir, would be to glorify God, who rules princes and governors, and to receive the order as

The subject of the oneness of the Church under its different appellations has been so briefly and admirably stated by a Rev. Canon of the Church of England, that I will take the liberty of inserting it, as speaking the same truth as the omitted pages. See "Sermons on the Adoption," by the Rev. Dr M'Neile.  
—ED.

"There is a world-wide liturgy going on. The worshippers are diverse in clime, and colour, and character, and language. The modes of conducting the worship are diverse: there are written prayers, and extempore prayers; there are old Psalms copied from the Hebrew Bible, and new hymns breathed from the Christian heart; there are Episcopalian transepts in the temple, and Presbyterian pews, and Congregationalist, and Methodist, and Baptist, and Moravian, and I know not how many other benches. To the narrow eye of an earthly spectator, the scene is confused; to the narrow ear of an earthly auditor, the sounds are discordant. But to the eye and ear of our great Interpreter in heaven, our great heart-

proceeding from God himself, as a trial, or as a punishment."

*Aged Man.* "What, Sir! would you submit your conscience to the authority of the world?"

*Gen. Min.* "I make a distinction, Sir. If the order of my superior was intended to prevent me from preaching the gospel, or from worshipping God according to my conscience, I should disregard such a prohibition, because it could not proceed from God, and I would rather lose my life in this world, than consent to honour man in preference to God. But if this order only

searching Priest, our great Liturgiser before the throne, the scene is one, the sound is one; not by silencing all except one; not by mingling them all together, so as to lose the distinctiveness of each; but, in all their diversities, one, a place for each, and a use for each. Every one is feeling, 'I am a sinner,' and saying it as best he can. Every one is feeling Christ is a Saviour; and when the mutterings of all reach heaven, their united sound is, 'Worthy is the Lamb.'"

required, on my part, a sacrifice, not of my faith, but of the manner in which I exercise it, I would prefer following the example of the faithful at Babylon, and, like them, hang my harp upon the willows, and no longer sing the songs of Zion to a carnal rebellion, which would occasion an evil of much greater magnitude than the deprivation to which I had refused to submit."

*One of the Ministers of the Pays de Vaud.* "We learn that the faithful have always acted in this manner. They never endeavoured to urge doctrines of secondary importance: they sacrificed all for the gospel; and, when found in the path of duty, were neither dismayed at the sight of the stake, nor intimidated by torture, but waited till God himself was pleased to grant them tranquillity."

*Gen. Min.* "They acted like a sheep which is held to prevent it from going for-

ward: it makes some feeble efforts to escape, as it sees with regret the rest of the flock at a distance. Although it bleats piteously, still it does not bite nor push with its horns. It patiently waits till the person who holds it gives it liberty and allows it to escape; and then a few bounds soon replace it in the midst of its companions, and even at their head."

*The Minister of the Pays de Vaud.*

"Then, dear brother, let us act like sheep who are desirous of regaining their flock which is before them. Let us be mild, but persevering; and let us leave to the chief Shepherd the care of protecting us. His crook and His angels are always at hand, and Satan will very soon lie prostrate at our feet."

"But, Sir," exclaimed some young people, "he is a roaring lion, who is ever on the alert to seize and devour us."

*Gen. Min.* "You know how our Saviour

resisted and vanquished him: it was by the Word, which is the sword of the Spirit, and the weapon of our warfare. It is written, that it is mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God,—by it the Lord perfects His strength in our weakness. The more, then, dear friends, we abound in sound doctrine, in the truth as it is in Jesus, the more we shall be clothed both with charity and energy, and thus be enabled to bear affliction, till we obtain relief.”

This was regarded as an invitation to meditate on the Word of God. All desired to listen to it, and most cordially acceded to the proposal, that the minister of Geneva should read a chapter and make some reflections. He approached a table; all rose, and, in a short prayer, he asked the Lord to bless what they were about to read, both to his friends and to himself.

He read the third chapter of the Epistle of St Paul to the Galatians, and took occasion to make the following remarks :—

*Gen. Min.* “ Truly, dear friends, the most important knowledge we can possess, is to know whether or not we are reconciled to God, our Creator, our Preserver, into whose presence our soul is very shortly to enter.

“ It is not a trivial question, whether we possess the love of God, or are exposed to His wrath ; for in His favour is life, and His anger is the dreadful second death. And as there can be no intermediate state, it is of paramount importance for us to know, with certainty, whether we are pardoned by God, received into a state of grace, and in possession of salvation. What we ought most ardently to desire, is to be able to say with confidence that we are saved, that our salvation is accomplished, and that our transition from this present life into eternity will

only introduce us to a state of glory; in which we shall for ever dwell in the bosom of our Father.

“Those who do not possess faith, but endeavour, by their good works, to merit the pardon of their sins, as well as all who are ignorant of the Saviour’s expiatory sacrifice,—do not believe that a Christian can enjoy the assurance of salvation, and accuse believers of arrogance, who, confidently reposing upon the grace and promises of the Son of God, maintain, in simplicity of heart, that they have obtained salvation gratuitously by the merits of the Saviour, and that their confidence is founded on the immutability of God, with whom there is no variableness or shadow of turning.

“Notwithstanding these cavils, my friends, this assurance which believers possess is perfectly lawful, and perhaps God will enable me to convince you of its truth, whilst I on the one hand prove,—



that a man may possess and enjoy this assurance of salvation, if he seeks it where alone it can be found; and on the other, that, so far from its arguing a presumptuous spirit, and encouraging indolence, it is, on the contrary, the most fruitful source of all good works.

“This is what I shall endeavour to illustrate under the two following heads:—

“1. *No Works in order to Salvation.*

“2. *No Salvation without Works.*

“1. We read that Abraham’s believing in God was imputed unto him for righteousness; and that his justification took place more than four centuries before the publication of the law of the ten commandments at Mount Sinai. We also read, that those who believe, are blessed with faithful Abraham, and, like him, are heirs according to the promise. Well, my friends, let us

transport ourselves to the time in which this righteous man, or rather this justified sinner, lived. We are now in the plains of Mamre, assembled in a tent. We are told that Jehovah has this day appeared to Abraham, and has promised him great blessings. The event interests us, and we express a desire to receive a similar favour from God. At this moment, in the midst of our conversation, the Patriarch enters. His countenance is solemn, but serene ; we see in it the expression of intense and devout joy. 'Blessed be the Lord !' he exclaims, 'for His unspeakable love ; His compassion is altogether incomprehensible.' He relates that Jehovah has appeared to him, and informs us of the promise of God, and the righteousness with which the Lord has invested him.—In what manner, we eagerly inquire ? What have you done to merit so great a blessing ?—'Ah !' he replies, 'can *man* have any merit in the presence of the

most Holy God? It is the Lord, it is the Lord who has had compassion on me, and made me a partaker of His grace.'—But what has He required of you?—Is not the Lord truth? What He has promised to me, who am but dust, shall He not perform? Shall not faithfulness mark the dealings of the Almighty? And is He not powerful, yes, all-powerful to fulfil what He has promised?

“Such, we may suppose, would have been the language of Abraham; and in it we see the grateful acknowledgments of a soul who has tasted that the Lord is gracious. The thought would never have crossed his mind, that his virtues, his own worthiness, or his obedience, could procure his pardon. He believed God: and it was this alone which inspired him with joy; this which afforded him tranquillity. Faith comprehends all peace and confidence, since God himself has declared, that He

pardons all offences, and that His love is free.

“In addressing you, therefore, my friends, and speaking to you in the person of the God of compassion, who appeared to our fellow-creature, to our brother Abraham, I ask, ‘Do you wish to have the joy which Abraham possessed, and, like him, to be assured that you are beloved, yes, beloved of God? Believe in God, as Abraham believed.’

“But what does God say to you? What does Jehovah promise you? God, who is love, addressing you as sinners, says, ‘I have loved you with an everlasting, an incomprehensible love. I was not willing that you should perish; and, to remove the weight of my wrath, I have substituted my Son, upon whom, in your place, I have poured my anger. He has borne your sins upon the cross; He has been wounded for your transgressions, and bruised for your

iniquities ; He has endured the punishment which you had incurred : and thus your peace is procured. Believe me then, when I assure you, that I have given you eternal life, and that this life is in my Son.'

"This is the manner in which God addresses you, dear friends ; these are the words of the Holy Spirit. Who amongst you believes the promise of God ? But, observe,—believes and applies it to himself ; acknowledges and declares that it is to him that it is addressed ; that it refers to himself, and that its truth is unquestionable, since it is God who has promised. Say, whoever amongst you believes,—not only that God is true in general, that this promise has been addressed to sinners ; but that God is faithful in addressing this promise to you ? Who amongst you appropriates it, and says, I am then saved ; for God, who declares it, is truth ?

*"It is indispensably requisite, that you*

should examine yourselves, and be assured that you really believe that this promise refers to you, and that your salvation has been obtained by the Son of God. You may acknowledge and believe that all the Bible is true, and that there is no salvation but in the faith of the promise of grace made in Christ ; and, notwithstanding this conviction, you may be destitute of saving faith. You may be orthodox ; that is to say, you may admit, you may defend, you may maintain, even at the peril of your life, the whole truths of the Christian Religion, and, nevertheless, remain strangers to the covenant, and consequently to the assurance of your salvation, to the peace of God. Your situation may resemble that of a sick man, who, in the paroxysm of a fever, may know, and confidently believe, that such a root is the only antidote ; he might even be assured, that it is to be found in a particular spot, and might be indignant were

any one to dispute the fact,—while, at the same time, he might neglect, or refuse, to make use of the remedy, and, notwithstanding all his right sentiments upon the subject, might fall a victim to the fever.

“I believe, that the reason of our meeting with so few persons, in the present day, truly assured of their salvation is, that many form a false idea of faith, mistaking for it a mere speculation of the mind, a cold orthodoxy. Our views of faith are very complicated. We mingle together its consequences, its fruits, its effects ; and, as these cannot be found in a soul where the source from which they spring—that is to say, pure faith—does not exist, we labour, we torment ourselves, we despond and entertain a hope of being one day saved, although this hope is vague, yields us no peace, and too often gives place to gloomy apprehensions. Possessed of such views, instead of saying, ‘Jesus has saved me on

His cross!—it is finished!—all is accomplished!’ we exclaim, ‘When shall I possess a faith sufficiently lively, sufficiently holy to induce Jesus to welcome me, and to give me grace?’ We figure to ourselves the Saviour placed at the extremity of an extensive plain, intersected with deep ditches and hedges, which we must leap over before we reach Him. Whilst, if we believed the testimony which God has given of His Son, when He says that He has saved sinners on His cross, we should come to Him, we should contemplate with the eye of faith this omnipotent Redeemer accursed in the sinner’s place more than eighteen centuries ago; and we should no longer be solicitous about rendering ourselves worthy of a Saviour, who has not waited to receive us till we had merited His love, since He has admitted us to a state of grace, whilst we were without strength,—whilst we had our existence *only in the determination of God, and be-*



fore we could do anything to entitle us to the compassion of the Almighty.

“That species of faith which justifies, is clearly exhibited in the example of Abraham, since he lived long before the law; and, therefore, the Patriarch could not suppose that he had merited anything at the hands of God, by obedience to a law which was not yet promulgated.

“But you will inquire, Of what avail is the law? The apostle answers, that ‘it was given on account of transgressions.’ Observe, dear friends, that the law has nothing to do with a man’s salvation. It is not to take away sin that a law is promulgated, but in order to prevent it, or, if it has been committed, to make it manifest, and to condemn it. Hence the study of this holy, just, and rigorous law; and all our endeavours to obey it, can no more take away sin than attentively looking at ourselves in a glass, after carefully clean-

ing it, can remove the spots from our face.

“It is a most fatal error to imagine that the law has the same efficacy, the same object, as the promise, and that it can give absolution to the sinner; for it is quite the contrary. The power of the law over the soul is to convince it of sin, that is to say, that it is cursed; for it is written, Cursed is the man who transgresses the law: and sin is the transgression of the law. The law is then exhibited to convince you, in the most unequivocal manner, that, so far from having merited what God promises, you have, on the contrary, by means of it, been rendered unworthy; and, so far as it is concerned, have for ever forfeited His favour. Consequently, if you wish to obtain the promise, renouncing all expectations from the law, you must receive it gratuitously, without money and without price; simply and implicitly believing Him, who

has said, 'I have promised you, and I have given you salvation in my Son.'

"I shall endeavour to illustrate my meaning by a comparison. I say this evening, 'My friends, I will give each of you, who returns in eight days, a very valuable Bible.' My promise is made. Some of them rely on it, and already, in hope, possess this Bible, from the perusal of which they anticipate great pleasure and instruction. On the day which I have fixed, they are in readiness. Some do not believe, and refuse to come at the appointed time. Others who believe me, and intend coming, persuade themselves that they have merited the gift; and that I only intimate my intention of giving them a reward. I am aware of this presumptuous error. On the appointed day, I write upon the door, the following words:—'To have merited the Bible you must have no sin.' They accordingly come. Those who simply relied on

my promise, enter, saying, after they read the inscription, ‘Certainly it is not merited, it is a free gift.’ Others who trusted in their own worthiness, being dismayed, and convinced of sin, dare not present themselves, until a friend explains that this inscription has not in the least changed my promise, and that I have only written it to make all understand that the Bible is a present, a favour, an obligation, and by no means a reward : that they have only to believe me, without disquieting themselves about their merits or demerits, to enter boldly, and to claim fulfilment of my promise.

“Such, my dear friends, is the nature of the law. You see that it in no way annuls a promise made by the Lord four hundred and thirty years before its promulgation ; it has no other object than that of making the pardon contained in the promise more acceptable.

“It is thus, by the dispensation of a favour altogether unmerited, and obtained by faith, by the simple act of belief, that God, in His wisdom, annihilates the pride and vain pretensions of man. There is here no ground for boasting. I shall suppose that one of you has entered the room this evening, with the idea that you will one day obtain salvation by your virtues, by amending your life; and that your own righteousness will in some measure procure for your soul the favour of the Lord. You discover, however, that you labour under a delusion; that your soul was received by the Son of God when He suffered in its place and was forsaken by His Father. You have believed this truth, this fact of which God assures you, and you now feel yourself relieved from a burden: your sins, which you have reason to trust have been removed by Jesus, and washed away in His blood, are no longer arrayed against you, and you are

inspired with unwonted confidence; you enjoy a peace of mind to which you were hitherto a stranger; you have in yourself the witness that you are justified before God; that He is your Father, and that you are His son. Such are the effects of faith; you have believed God, and your soul has been enriched with every blessing. What merit can you claim in believing a simple fact, in receiving the testimony of God? Would you not have reason to be ashamed, were you to withhold conviction from the declaration of the Almighty? Can you take credit to yourself for possessing a faith, the absence of which would argue the height of folly, or rather the most absurd, the most unpardonable pride?

“On the other hand, what have you done to procure this righteousness, this pardon, this welcome, which you are sensible is offered you by God? All this work of love has been accomplished, terminated, and per-

fectcd, before you were called into existence. You, who have believed, are sensible that you have been saved long before you could be aware that there was a sin which God curses, or a salvation which He bestows; and, in His application of it to you, who have this day been favoured to believe His word, spoken by the mouth of a poor fellow-sinner, His servant, what merit can you boast? Lazarus is in the tomb; he has now lain four days,—he has become putrid. The voice of God is heard; it says, ‘Lazarus, come forth!’ The summons is obeyed, and Lazarus rises. Who will maintain that the dead man anticipated this summons? He was dead. Will Lazarus, after his resurrection, begin to boast? will he say with self-complacency, I have acted in such a manner as to induce God to raise me from the dead? or, ‘There was still within me a spark of life, which God has only rekindled?’ He was dead; and when

we are dead, can we possess any remains of life?

“ Which of you, dear friends, will boast, because, when dead in trespasses and sins, the compassion, the matchless love, the everlasting love of God, has given him new life in Christ, the Lamb of God, sacrificed before the creation of the world, for souls elected in Him before the creation of the world? Yes, if you wish to glory, do so; it is your duty, but glory in your Saviour, in His finished work, in the righteousness with which He has invested you, in the grace which He has shewn to your unworthiness! Fear not to believe; it is the commandment of God, and your bounden duty. Be not afraid boldly to say, ‘ Christ has redeemed me when I was ruined.’ It is a fact; and you must not hesitate to repeat a fact which God assures you is true. Act like the pardoned criminal; rejoice, sing, and leap-for joy. Truly you have



reason to rejoice. It is not a small comfort to have no longer the fear of hell. The certain inheritance of heaven is no trifling acquisition. Glory, then, in God, O believer, and declare,—for it is true, and it is to the glory of the compassion of the Lord, that you are, that you have been saved,—that salvation is a blessing conferred on you, a blessing eternal as its Author, to whom alone the honour and merit is due.

“ This sweet, this glorious and all divine truth displeases the world. It is a stumbling-block and an offence. Why? Because it humbles man; because it reduces the child of this vain world to his proper level; because it discards, with pity and contempt, that righteousness, and those works, which man prefers to the loving-kindness and tender mercies of his God, of his sovereign Benefactor. Ah! how is the heart of man estranged from God! His enmity towards *his King* is only equalled by that of a re-

bellicious subject filled with malignity, when he learns that his sovereign has granted him a pardon. 'Pardon!' he repeats with indignation, 'as if I stood in need of pity, —as if I could not support myself!'

"The wise and learned of this world, wishing to flatter and please the world, studiously avoid calling on it to imitate Abraham in believing the promise of mercy, and like him, to be made an heir of the righteousness which is by faith. They studiously discard the idea, that rebels against God ought most thankfully to accept a free pardon. They obstinately reject, as a lie, the declaration of God himself, that 'man is dead, yes, dead in trespasses and sins; that in this state he is a child of wrath, and that, in order to become a child of God, he must be born again.' They pretend to effect in man a change sufficient to unite him to his Creator; but what is the result of all their efforts, all their reforma-

tions, all their improvements? They take a piece of iron, which they file and polish. It possesses some splendour, it is true, but has it become gold in being made brilliant? And is it not gold which God requires for heaven? When will they understand that all the polish which the morality of the world, which the strictest obedience to the law can produce on man's external deportment, does not in the least effect a change on the man himself, does not reach his heart? When will they acknowledge that it is only the Almighty, the Creator, who is able to convert iron into gold, and who, in like manner, creates man anew; or, in other words, makes him a Christian? For it is written, that 'he who is in Christ is a new creature.' The iron has become gold, it is no longer polished iron.

"Such was the change which took place on Abraham. Before his justification, he was a sinner amongst the children of men,

a child of wrath even as others,—iron, my friends, impure iron. After he was justified, he became a child of God, a blessed heir of the promise,—gold, and the finest gold of the sanctuary. Thus was he born again,—thus did he receive a nature which he did not possess before, even the divine nature. He was a new creature ; a spiritual creature, and no longer carnal ; a denizen of heaven, not of the earth and of its vanity. The Spirit of God was imparted to him, and it dwelt in him as in its temple ; and what befel him,—what the Lord did for him was written for an example to us, and as an encouragement to souls, wearied of sin, apprehensive of its dreadful consequences, and desirous of fleeing from the wrath to come ; to partake of the grace of God, to be made heirs of His everlasting glory.

“ I conclude, then, dear friends, by entreating you also to believe Him,—to receive

for yourselves what God declares He did for you, when He inflicted the vengeance due to your aggravated guilt on the Holy and Just One, your substitute and representative.

“If you believe God; if you set to your seal that He is true in what He promises, you will immediately experience unspeakable peace. It would be a contradiction to admit that God has saved you in Christ, that your sins, your own sins, have been already punished in the person of your Saviour,—and at the same time to consider yourself under the curse, and still exposed to the wrath to which Jesus himself has submitted in your place. It will be in this manner, by this faith, imputed to you for righteousness, as it was to Abraham, that you will obtain the assurance of your salvation; not indeed a haughty assurance, as if you were entitled to salvation by your own works, but a humble though firm as-

surance,—that of the criminal, who, after having confessed that he merits the gibbet, reposes confidence in the clemency of his sovereign, who pardons his crime. You will then acknowledge, you do acknowledge, you have already acknowledged,—you who believe the testimony of God, in regard to His Son, that salvation is entirely in the finished work of Jesus; that He, the Son of God, has accomplished it; that you are, by grace, invested with it, through faith,—and that there is no truth more deserving of credit, than the one with which I set out,—‘*No works in order to salvation.*’

“But, my friends, the heart is deceitful above all things; who can know it? Satan is subtle, and employs falsehood, seduction, and flattery, to deprive the child of God of peace, to prevent the sinner from being united to Jesus. One of the stratagems of this father of lies, this enemy of God, is to foster a presumptuous security, by leading

men to rest satisfied with a speculative faith, with a faith without obedience, which is the life of love. And, as this is the objection urged by the world, in every age, against the ministers of God, and which, in the present day, is reiterated on every side,—which we continually hear,—‘That the evangelical party require no good works, that their religion is admirably suited for sinners, who have only to say,—I believe, I have faith, I am saved; and then fearlessly to follow the dictates of their evil passions;’—as this calumny is by no means uncommon, it will not be unprofitable to refute it, and, at the same time, to put you on your guard against a carnal security, a fatal indolence, by now proceeding to prove, dear friends, that, although good works are not necessary in order to salvation, *there is no salvation without works.*

*"2. No Salvation without Works.\*"*

"To maintain that true faith, for I speak only of true faith, of the faith of Abraham,—of a heart-felt faith which saves, and not of the vain opinion of those who say, 'I believe in Jesus,' but who would speak more correctly if they said, 'I believe that Jesus has saved sinners, but not me;' to assert, I say, that Christian faith acts in the believer as a licence to sin, as an antidote against the stings of conscience, and is consequently a source of iniquity, is to aver, that the life which Jesus bestowed on Lazarus promoted the corruption of his body, and was an inducement to remain in the tomb.

\* The observations under the second head were made the day following. We here connect them in order to avoid unnecessary repetition, and for the sake of uniformity. For the same reasons, we have also given at once the substance of what took place at two conventicles. This remark will be satisfactory to those who disapprove of long meetings.



“We are astonished that so ridiculous an assertion can be advanced by a person of sound sense. And, notwithstanding, how many books, how many pamphlets contain this absurdity! From hearing their authors declaim against the evangelical party, and the doctrine of faith, one would be led to suppose, that preachers of faith carry on a traffic in indulgences, and that Christ is the minister of sin; that it is only requisite to entice a soul to the cross of Jesus, to unite it with tenfold power to Satan and his abominations. According to such persons, the assurance of having been saved by the love of our faithful Redeemer; of thus being reconciled to God; of being sealed with His Holy Spirit, and animated with a lively hope of the glory of heaven; this confidence, this adoption, this seal, this hope, in the mind of believers, are equivalent to hatred of their Saviour, to contempt of their heavenly Father, to a

compact with sin, to the hope of being with the devil and his angels. Truly, this reasoning is incomprehensible ; and it requires to be repeated as often as it really is, and that too by persons of the same gravity as those who assert it, to make us believe that it is really urged.

“What is the origin of their error? Does it not proceed from mistaking orthodoxy for faith? from confounding a vague opinion with belief? probably from never having themselves believed? Being satisfied with an intellectual speculation on those truths which are the objects of faith, they are unable to comprehend the gospel plan of salvation. Having never applied to their own soul, to their own heart, the blood of the Son of God ; having never said to the Saviour, ‘It is for me, for myself, that it was shed ; I have been washed in this fountain,’—they have not yet experienced its sanctifying influence. They

are satisfied with contemplating, with admiring, the structure, the beautiful symmetry of the palace ; but they have not yet entered, and are indignant at those who, from the windows of the edifice, declare how well they are lodged ; that the interior far exceeds the outside ; that it were better to seek for shelter, than expose themselves, by their delay and their trifling, to be overtaken by the night and the approaching storm. You are sensible that it would be altogether unpardonable to reply to so gracious an invitation, by such reproaches as these : ‘ Is it not from pride that you thus separate yourselves from us ? Have we not reason to fear that you insult the Lord, now that you are in His palace ? ’

“ But let us leave this unfounded accusation, and endeavour to obtain edification ; as methinks I hear some of you, dear friends, exclaim, ‘ Works, works ! Has the

Christian none?' Yes, my friends, the Christian performs works, and those much better than before he was a Christian. His faith is a living faith; it is not what is termed dead faith. Abraham, after having believed God, after having obtained peace with God, devoted himself to the Lord, and withheld not his only-begotten son. The believer, the child of Abraham, is also inspired with similar feelings, and follows the steps of his Spiritual Father: the first use he makes of the liberty which he has received by free grace, is to throw himself at the feet of his King, of his Saviour, to bind himself to obedience by the offering of his heart, and by the oath of his love.

"Do not imagine that it can be otherwise,—that there can be any union between Christ and Belial. There is none. You are followers of the one, or of the other. Whoever belongs to Belial, that is to say, to

the world, has no part with Christ; his portion is in the world. In the same way, also, he who belongs to Christ, is not of the world; he is Christ's. To the Christian, old things are passed away; all things, I repeat it, dear friends—all things are become new. To pretend, then, to belong to Christ, and to continue to possess our old ideas, our old habits, our old inclinations, our old hopes, in a word, our old heart, is to belie the Word of God; it is to arrogate the possession of a secret to which God himself is a stranger,—that of blending light with darkness, sin with grace.

“The nature of the gospel covenant has been defined by the Lord himself, when He says by His prophets, and particularly by Jeremiah and Ezekiel, that, in justifying man, ‘He will remove his heart of stone, and give him a heart of flesh, a new heart, in which He will write His law.’ This char-

acteristic of the Christian has not been changed by the lapse of ages. It is the same in the Church of Christ in the nineteenth century, as it was two thousand four hundred years ago, or in the days when Jesus dwelt in the midst of us. The Spirit of God does not produce effects different from those which it did when the Lord said to Nicodemus, 'That which is born of the Spirit is spirit,' or when He declared by the mouth of St Paul, that the fruits of the Spirit are all the Christian virtues—that is to say, good works. The union which the most Holy God has established between His Spirit and holiness is as indissoluble as it is necessary. In like manner, faith produced by this Spirit, the faith by which we are justified, is also as inseparable from good works as life in Lazarus was from his resurrection. So, also, faith is the resurrection of the soul; it is the life of works, of good works.

“ You have, then, great reason to inquire, Have I faith? Have I ever believed in the Saviour? You who find nothing new in your hearts,—nothing different from what you have always experienced; you who pursue the same path which you have all along followed, with this trifling change,—that you impose better on others,—that you are perhaps ashamed of your conduct before Christians, because it excites their contempt and detestation; you who continue to possess the same selfishness, love of repose, desire of esteem, of the respect, of the approbation of those around you,—the same wilfulness, bad temper, discontent, murmurs, chagrin, when anything crosses you, when your interests are affected, when circumstances occur to derange your plans, when God arrests you in your career, by sickness, or some other trial; you who still feel the same want of confidence in the Saviour, the same secret infidelity, the

same apprehensions about the future, the same anxiety about your domestic concerns,—what shall we eat? what shall we drink? what shall we put on?—and particularly, the same fear of death, the same anguish, when the words, ‘You must depart,’ sound in your ears,—the same discouragement in your own difficulties, the same insensibility to those of your neighbour, the same indifference about the salvation of souls, the same inattention to the advancement of the kingdom of Jesus, the same neglect of the things of God,—of prayer, of meditation, of reading the Bible,—the same distaste for heaven and for the hope of glory.

“Truly the man who finds himself in this situation does not possess life, and he has reason to entertain doubts whether he be partaker of a salvation which is never associated with the love of sin, which he has refused to accept from His grace, who, in offering it, also offers His crown of thorns,



His nails, and His cross. Ah! it is not a treaty with sin that the glorious Saviour effects in a soul where He takes up His abode by faith. It is war, interminable war against the flesh and its lusts; against the world, and all that the world contains. It is a renunciation which He requires,—a renunciation, my friends, I again repeat, of everything but God. The absolute demand which He makes is your heart,—that heart which is the source of life,—your whole heart, with its affections, thoughts, desires, inclinations, and adoration. He exacts a sacrifice, similar to that which He required from Abraham; the victim which He chooses is your best beloved, that is to say—yourself; dear friend, yourself.

“This is the covenant which Jesus makes with His children: ‘He gave Himself for them;’ He has for ever redeemed them, it is true, but He has also purchased them as His property: they belong exclusively to

Him ; they are His peculiar people, zealous of good works. He gave Himself for His church, that He might purify it. Whosoever is a member of it is holy ; he loves holiness ; he follows after it ; he seeks it ; it is his life, his joy, his consolation, his only object !

“ The gospel includes this holiness in two precepts ; the one that of performing good works, the other of being the foremost to perform them.

“ Good works, my friends, that is to say, delight in God’s law, happiness in fulfilling what it enjoins, are represented as the road that leads from earth to heaven, and which terminates at the gate of the city of God. This is the sacred road, the path of the Lord, the way of light and peace, the narrow road which few follow. This image is peculiarly calculated to make us understand the place which sanctification holds in the Christian life. I shall endeavour to illus-

trate it by a comparison :—I have received the right of citizenship in a foreign town ; I am desirous of visiting my new fellow-citizens. I follow the road which leads to this city ; my certificates are in my pocket. So long as I continue in this road I approach the town, and my anxiety to arrive at the end of my journey proportionally increases. Those who meet me on the road, say with certainty, he is on the way to the town of which he is a citizen. But the idea never crosses their mind that it is the road which has built the town, fixed its gates, and, especially, which has conferred upon me the freedom of the city. They know that I am indebted for this privilege to the munificence of the magistrates, that they have given me the patent, and that the gates will at once fly open, which would be shut against me, if I could not produce this title. Thus, the road possesses no other quality, is of no other use than that of connecting

the place where I was, and where I received the patent, with the city whither I am bound, and where my rights are to be for ever confirmed. To pursue this road has no other effect than to assure both myself and those whom I meet, that I am on the way to this town, whose towers glitter in the distance, and whose arms I bear. But it is so indispensably necessary that I should pursue the right road, and have my steps directed towards the city, that if I followed a different path, or if I turned back and ran in an opposite direction, every one would have reason to say, that I was not going thither, and I should be obliged to acknowledge it myself.

“Thus, if the road has any merit, it cannot be that of dispensing the favours of the magistrates, and still less of bestowing the right of citizenship. It may justly boast, indeed, that the citizen’s travelling upon it is necessary, as a proof that he is on his

way to the town. It may boast, that if any one is not upon it, he will never reach the city; but this is all, and when he arrives at the gates he has no more use for the road.

“Such are the good works of the believer. The path of holiness may boast that it is the only road which leads from earth to heaven. It may thus address mankind, ‘My travellers, rejoice: take courage, I conduct you with certainty to the mansions of bliss.’ We, who see you persevere in following it, are filled with holy joy on your account; we say, with thanksgivings to the Lord, ‘These are citizens of Heaven; see with what confidence they approach the new Jerusalem! The gospel is in their hands, they have the mark of the Saints: a new name; they have received the white stone. Oh, what happiness! The Saviour is glorified in them.’ We would entertain the well-founded hope that you will reach the

gates and enter through them : to this conclusion, both the road and ourselves arrive as the consequence of a fact ; I mean, of your diligently pursuing the road which leads to the Heavenly city.

“But if, on the other hand, we see you following the broad road, and, at every step descending with the multitude towards hell, in vain will you arrogantly exclaim, that you are citizens of heaven, Christians, children of the kingdom ; in vain will you point to the gospel, and repeat it upon the road ; in vain will you tax with folly, misrepresentation, with fanaticism, with party spirit, those who, from the middle of the sacred path, entreat you with tears to return, to come up to them ; all your boasting will not deceive them ; and all your hypocrisy, in calling yourselves Christians, will be of no avail in weakening the ocular demonstration which they possess—that you are *not pursuing the same path as themselves.*”

Whilst you are descending towards impenetrable darkness, they are ascending to the mansions of light. And if they did not tell you so, the very stones would speak; for those on which you tread are polluted with the abominations of the world.

“In order to a person’s being assured that he is on the way to Heaven, that he belongs to Christ, he must be found upon the sacred road, in the path of sanctification. This is the tract which Christ followed. Christ is to be found in none other; by it alone the Good Shepherd leads His flock. No one without sanctification, no, although he had been forty years a guide and a teacher, although he may understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, no one without sanctification shall enter the abodes of bliss, the kingdom of holiness.

“Make up your mind, then, you who believe in Jesus, to follow Him in the path of light. You will find on it a cross which

you must carry ; a cross which is heavy, stained with blood, the cross which your Saviour bore. Take up your cross and proceed. Proceed without apprehension : this is the path ; see, Jesus is before you. By His side are all who had professed that they seek a city not built by man ; a heavenly country. These are your brethren ; they all bear their cross ; and the renunciation of the world and its vanities is engraved upon their hearts. Join this heavenly company ; walk along with them ; be amongst the foremost of those who surround you ; set them an example. This is the commandment of Christ, your Saviour, your glorious King.

“ It is my wish, He says by St Paul—it is my wish that they who have believed be careful to maintain good works. As if He had said, ‘ It is their duty, who are called by my new name, whom I have rescued from Babylon, and who bear the vessels of



the Lord, to be the first to separate themselves from all that is defiled. It is the duty of the children of light to make their light to shine before men ; it becomes those whom I have chosen, to be unblamable in love ; by their brotherly affection, to set an example that may encourage and strengthen their companions, who are still in bondage, who are weak, or fearful.'

"And, indeed, who shall be an example to the world, but the children of God ? Who shall testify their hatred of sin, but sinners who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb ? Who shall live a new life, but those who are risen with Christ ? Who shall shew, by their demeanour, that the honours of the world are despicable, and that the things which are unseen are alone entitled to a place in our affections, but those who, by their lively hope, are already enthroned in heaven with the saints and the angels ? In whom shall love, love

which is the seal of Christ and the glory of wisdom, shine with unsullied purity, if not in those who, by love, have been ransomed from death, and are clothed with life?

“Say, dear friends, to whom does it belong, or rather to whom has God committed the charge of restoring in the midst of our nation, along with the purity of faith, the fidelity of obedience, if not to us, who have obtained this faith at so high a price, and tasted how gracious the Lord is, how easy His yoke, how light His burden, and how delightful are His commandments? From whom are virtues, the loftiest and most arduous, to be expected? To whom shall we look for sincere and consistent piety,—for a bold and open confession of the name of Jesus,—for the public and private worship of God,—for the avowed preference of heaven to earth? To whom shall we look for obedience to laws,—reverence to magistrates and those in

authority,—for love of order,—scrupulous attention to the encouragement and protection of morality,—strict observance of oaths,—sanctification of the Lord's day? To whom shall we look for justice,—equity,—fidelity in business,—abhorrence of all contention,—of all disputes,—of all hatred,—of all quarrels? To whom shall we look for love to our enemies,—for blessings on those who curse us,—for kindness to those who hate us,—for prayers on behalf of those who persecute us,—yes, my brethren, for prayers on behalf of those who, on account of righteousness and the kingdom of God, as well as for the glorious name by which we are called, injure, calumniate, and load us with opprobrious epithets? In a word, who shall imitate our Father which is in heaven, in doing good to all men,—in promoting peace,—in submitting to labour, grief, privations, and sacrifices,—in not esteeming our lives dear, if even

by such means we may be enabled to enlighten, to awaken, to lead souls to Christ? From whom are these good works to be chiefly expected? Who are to abound most in them, if not those who have felt and believed that this is the example which their Saviour has left them to imitate; and who know that the day is at hand in which glory, honour, and immortality will be conferred by God on those who, adding to faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge temperance, to temperance patience, to patience godliness, to godliness brotherly love, to brotherly love kindness, charity,—shall enjoy, in thus making their calling and election sure, an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?

“Christians! be in the foremost ranks: this is the word of command. Let no one get before you in the path of sanctification. You are children of God; shew it by your

conduct. Will the Lord grant you His presence behind the ranks of sinners? You are free—released from sin;—shew then, by the alertness, the energy, the quickness of your movements, that truly your feet are no longer shackled—that your neck is not bowed beneath the yoke of pollution. You are the children of Abraham, and with him, by faith, inherit the promise. Act like Abraham. He departed from Ur, in the land of the idolatrous Chaldeans; he was a pilgrim and stranger. Depart, believers, depart from the idolatry of the world; and being the foremost in directing your steps towards Mount Moriah, convince all who see you ascend, that the command of the Lord is dearer to the children of the promise, than all the seductions, all the hopes, all the fears of the earth—that the kingdom of God and His righteousness is the sole, the constant object of your fondest affections;

and that, although you have received your salvation gratuitously, although you have not obtained it by works, now that you have received it, your life consists in performing works to the glory of God your Saviour ; so that every one may rest assured, that, in your case, *'there is no salvation without works.'*

“Happy Christians, who are thus the salt of the earth, and the glory of your Master ! Happy inhabitants of this lower orb, who, as you travel through it, experience and diffuse around you joys and blessings the most delightful and most lasting ! Happy mortals, who, after suffering for a few moments the contradiction of a world which has not known you, because it does not know the Father, shall be unspeakably blessed during the endless ages of eternity, in the approbation of Jesus ; the anticipation of which you already experience in the path of duty,—in waiting for His com-

ing! Ah! be not apprehensive that He will suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able. You are dependent on Him; and He is faithful. If you are weak, He can strengthen you; if you turn to the right or to the left, He will call you back, He will stretch out to you His hand; if you should fall, be not afraid that He will forsake you. He came from heaven to recover you from your first fall: do you imagine that, after claiming you as His own, He will ever leave His beloved; 'those for whom He intercedes with the Father?'

"No, my friends, the Christian cannot cease to be a Christian; the gifts of God are without repentance. The blood of Christ was not shed for a sinner, that he might be washed only for a few hours. The sacrifice which He offered is eternal as well as complete. He who has part in it, will never be deprived of this good part.

‘It shall not be taken from him,’ saith the Lord.

“How consoling is this truth! yet how seldom is it admitted! How many people regard it as dangerous! Beware, say they, of preaching such doctrine: it would very soon engender crimes. Gracious God! pardon their blasphemy. They know not that the assurance of Thy love is very different from hatred towards Thee. They are not aware that the greater the certainty we possess of being with Thee, Lord, in heaven, the more we shall dread being separated from Thee, even for a few hours. Ah! what child of God would willingly commit sin, seeing it is sin which exposes him to the displeasure of his Father?

“No, be not afraid, you who have believed like Abraham, be not afraid to repose all your confidence in God? He will finish the work which He has begun. He has said it; He is faithful. You have not



chosen Him, but He has chosen you. It is His powerful arm which upholds you ; and who is able to pluck you out of His hand ? Is He not stronger than all ? He is the All Mighty. And, since none can separate you from Him, since you are united to Him by faith, it must be He who lets you go ; that is to say, who ceases to hold you ; that is to say, to love you ; that is to say, to be faithful ; that is to say, to be immutable. A downright absurdity !

“Be assured then that you belong to the Saviour, because you believe, as Abraham believed. Be confirmed in this assurance, by the sincerity of your obedience, by the abundance of your good works. But so soon as you have received Christ, or rather have been received by Him,—have, through faith in Him, been introduced into this *grace*, hold fast your profession ; and *re-joice in the hope of the glory of God*, in

the power by which you are kept unto salvation—ready to be revealed in the last times, when you shall be put in possession of an inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, which cannot fade away, and which is reserved in heaven for you who believe.

“But, perhaps, my dear friends, this very natural objection will occur to one of you—‘May not the Christian experience so deplorable a fall, that the bond of love which unites him to God may be broken, and thus the sinner be deprived of grace?’ The Holy Spirit has already answered, ‘That neither death, nor life,’ (and it is in the Christian’s life that the fault in question is found,) ‘nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come,’ (and this fault would belong to things present,) ‘nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ

Jesus, our Lord.' And yet, they will say, had David died before his return to God, and Peter during his denial,—‘But did they die in such circumstances? That is the question: did God permit them to die? God, He who has said, I will not leave thee, nor forsake thee; did He forsake them?’ And further to explain this subject, as well as to relieve your attention and comfort your minds, I will illustrate this doctrine by the following allegory:—

*Allegory.*

“A traveller, after a fatiguing journey, arrives, at the close of day, in an extensive desert. No road, no path presents itself to his weary eye. All is silent and solitary. The wind, which announces the approach of night, already begins to agitate the *heath*. The unfortunate wanderer stops, —his heart is overwhelmed,—his strength

is exhausted,—a few tears of grief slowly trickle down his pale cheeks, and his mouth is only opened to pronounce these words: ‘Then I am lost.’

“The night has set in—he is involved in darkness. The forlorn traveller prepares to take some repose; he wraps himself in his cloak; he endeavours to sleep. But, suddenly, a drawn sword, held by an invisible hand, approaches to pierce him. The traveller, horror-struck, darts across the heath, till his strength fails, and he sinks exhausted. But the sword continues to pursue him: it appears more flaming, sharper than before. It whistles in the air, and the unhappy victim summons fresh vigour to escape its stroke. Oh! who can depict the anguish of his soul? There is no help, no support, no hope. Had he but a friend—some one to share his flight and apprehensions! But he is alone, and he has lost all presence of mind. Wishing

for death, he throws himself on his knees. The idea of God comes across his mind—  
‘My God!’ he exclaims; ‘my God, have pity on me!’

“Scarce has this petition escaped his lips, when his eyes, which had been hitherto closed, are opened, and he sees, at a little distance, a stately edifice, refulgent with light. ‘Knock,’ says a voice from within, ‘and it shall be opened to you.’ The traveller believes. He stretches out his hand; he knocks, and the door is immediately opened; an irresistible power hurries the wretched fugitive into the interior of the edifice, and the door, which is of brass, is shut; he leans against it, to take a little breath—to assure himself that he is beyond the reach of the frightful sword—that it has disappeared. Oh! who can tell the joy of his soul? Who can paint the new feelings which animate his heart? He is no longer a wanderer. The desert? he has left

it. He is not alone nor forsaken. A voice said to him, 'Knock;' a mighty power laid hold of him—brought him into the asylum. The sword, above all, the sword does not menace him any longer. The brazen door is between him and the world, and all its united efforts to open it are vain.

"Peace to the traveller! he has entered his Father's house, the abode of peace, in which is the assembly of his brethren, and along with them their Elder Brother, whose presence inspires them with unmingled joy. Peace to the traveller! he has for ever ceased to wander in the barren desert; he is for ever removed from the terrors without. Peace: yes, peace to the traveller who has entered! for peace shall be multiplied to him, in the way which he shall follow.

"Such is the harmonious anthem which rises in the upper part of this glorious abode. These are songs of joy,—of devout and solemn joy. They melt the heart; they

deeply affect the traveller; his cheeks are bedewed with the tears of gratitude. He wishes to join this melodious chorus; but it is silent, and a voice exclaims, 'Ascend, my son.' 'In what manner, Lord?' the traveller eagerly replies; 'all is dark around me.' Upon this, the sword which had caused such apprehensions, appears in the porch; but it is no longer the same dreadful weapon; it has become a lamp to his feet, a light to his path; and, going before, it guides him towards a large staircase, at the top of which is a cross, on which he is directed constantly to fix his eyes.

"Be not apprehensive of his falling, so long as he faithfully follows the lamp, and contemplates the cross. But, alas! who is acquainted with the fickleness of the human heart—with all its foolishness, all its ingratitude? Seduced, I know not by what object, by what recollection, by what caprice, the traveller for a moment

withdraws his eyes; he stumbles, and, after receiving many bruises, falls to the bottom of the staircase, even to the door, against which the unfortunate individual is precipitated.

“Unhappy man! What would have become of thee, had not this been the door against which the gates of hell shall not prevail?—had thy Father not said, that ‘no one openeth what He hath shut?’ Were He not omnipotent; were He not faithful,—where, I ask thee, wouldst thou now have been? But, be of good cheer; it is in His house that thy fall has happened; thy fall in no degree diminishes the security of thy asylum. Thou has stumbled against the rock; but this is the rock on which thou leanest. Be not dismayed, thou child of Him who is faithful; his compassion is as eternal as Himself. Rise! Is He not all-powerful to put thee again in the right way; to heal thy wounds;



to render thee more vigilant and more steadfast?

“The traveller, reanimated and strengthened by these consoling words which proceed from the cross, regains his feet. He feels that there is some One by his side who supports and comforts him. ‘It is thy Friend,’ a voice exclaims, ‘thy faithful Friend; lean on my arm; be not afraid; thou canst not weary me; I am all-mighty.’ He recognises the voice of the Friend of Sinners. Encouraged by those soothing admonitions, and ashamed of his first fall, he hastens forward with increasing alacrity, eager to approach his Father, as well as to unite with his brethren and participate in their joys. He carefully watches every step, repels every distracting thought, —every vain imagination; and fixing his eyes upon the Cross, towards which he *gradually ascends*, he every moment enjoys *a happiness more unmingled*, and, at the

same time, feels himself invigorated for new efforts, as well as inspired with a longing desire to reach the top of the staircase, and to be admitted into the presence of his Father.

“ You are aware, dear friends, you have felt that, whilst under the curse of the law, whilst exposed to the vengeance of its sword, we are saved by all-powerful grace ; and so soon as we are admitted into the church of Jesus, which is the house of God, our sanctification immediately commences ; and, however great, however deplorable are the falls of the believer, they only happen, my brethren, within the house under his Father’s roof.

“ Trust, then, in God with your whole heart. Cleave to Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith. Rise, then, believers, rise, conducted by the law, which is your unerring guide. Embrace your Saviour’s Cross, and let no one deprive you of your crown.”

The discourse being concluded, the whole conventicle rose, and the Genevese minister prayed nearly as follows :—

PRAYER.

“ It is Thou alone, Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom belong dominion and glory, for ever and ever : it is Thou alone who canst strengthen Thy children, give them the victory, and enable them to obtain the prize. Accept of our most humble thanksgivings for the blessing Thou hast granted us, in revealing Thyself as our Father ; and in teaching us that we are Thy ransomed people,—that Jesus, Thy well-beloved Son, has given Himself for us, and that we are for ever united to Him. Oh, enable us to glorify Thee ! May we rejoice in God our Saviour ; for Thou hast remembered the low estate of Thy servants ; and *Thou hast unloosed the bonds with which*

we were bound, and hast conferred on us the liberty of Thy chosen people. What, O Lord, what shall we render unto Thee? Thou art ever loading us with Thy mercies. We are the monuments of Thy goodness. It is of Thy boundless love that we are preserved. Thou hast this day afforded us another proof of Thy kindness. What a privilege have we enjoyed, in being permitted to assemble in Thy name! Thou hast been with us, Lord Jesus, according to Thy promise. Thy Holy Spirit has revealed to us the truth contained in Thy Word. Oh, graciously bless to each of us the doctrine of salvation which we have heard. May we be rooted and grounded in Thy Son, O God our Father, so that we may live in Thee; and, while we are here below, may our conduct be that of citizens of heaven.

“May these blessings, O Thou Preserver of Men, be diffused around us; may they

rest upon our brethren of every tribe and language! We thank Thee that our heart is enlarged; that our love extends to all Thy church; that all Thy children are brethren. May we grow in love, gracious Saviour, that all may know that we are Thy disciples. Do not permit Satan to have dominion over us; may he never implant in our souls the seed of hatred or of division. Wilt Thou, therefore, all-bountiful Lord God, who never refusest to listen to us, answer the prayers we offer up for those who know not Thy Son, who are still in darkness and in the shadow of death. Have compassion on those lands where idolatry prevails, and where Satan rules. Thou, Lord, seest the abundance of the harvest, and how few are the reapers. Wilt Thou, wilt Thou increase the number of Thy pastors, Thy ministers, Thy evangelists, Thy missionaries? Open their mouth, and prepare their path, that they may go

forth in Thy name, and that their voice may be heard even at the ends of the earth. May the gospel also be preached in the midst of ourselves, and especially, Lord, to those misguided persons who rage against Thee, and against Thine Anointed; and who, on account of Thy name, rise up against us, miserable sinners, whom Thou hast saved. Lord, punish them not for their anger or threatenings. They know not what they do. We supplicate Thee, in an especial manner, to enlighten, to touch the heart of him who has just written against us and our meetings. O God! how has Thy church received this blow from him who ought to have been its defender! How much have Christians to lament the opposition of one of their brethren, whom they most highly honoured! Lord, is it possible? Oh, take pity on his soul! for the sake of Thy compassion, convince him of his error. God of love, inspire him with love.

“As to ourselves, O our God and Father ! our highest wish is to submit to Thee and to Thy authority. Render us obedient to Thee,—enable us to honour our magistrates, on whose persons and counsels we entreat Thee to pour forth Thy good Spirit. Lord, grant them this grace—to consecrate the authority Thou hast reposed in them to the protection of the gospel, and of those by whom it is openly professed, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life.

“Receive us in Thy love, gracious Father. Pardon, oh, pardon Thy children, and mantle us anew in the garment of salvation, in the robe of Christ’s righteousness ; to whom, with the Father, and Holy Spirit, be glory, dominion, and adoration, for ever and ever. *Amen.*”

This prayer appeared to make a lively impression on all present. There prevailed throughout the whole conventicle a feeling of profound joy and peace ; such as the

believer experiences when he approaches his God, or when he offers up sacrifices of praise, of obedience, and love.

*One of the Ministers of the Pays de Vaud.* "How much are we refreshed! What an agreeable evening! How short and delightful has it appeared!"

*One of the Ladies.* "Oh! the impression made upon my mind will never be effaced. I cannot sufficiently bless and thank God for what He has permitted me to hear this evening. I trust that it will produce in my soul everlasting fruit."

*An old Lady.* "For my part, I confess, in all simplicity, that I never, before this evening, fully understood all that my gracious Saviour has done for me. I trust that I have embraced Him: or, I should rather say, I feel that He, yes, He Himself has visited my soul. Oh, how is my joy increased!"

*An Officer.* "Never, till to-day, have I



heard the gospel. This evening, and I will avow it before the whole canton, I have learned that I have a Saviour!"

*Gen. Min.* "Notwithstanding, sir, your canton is more fortunate than others, in possessing many evangelical ministers as well as faithful and enlightened pastors."

*Officer.* "I agree with you, sir, but I have never understood them. I never before was acquainted with my Saviour; I knew Him, and yet was ignorant of Him. God be praised! I shall henceforward study the Bible!"

*Another Minister of the Pays de Vaud.*  
"How gracious are the dealings of God! He sends us one of His servants, whose preaching He blesses, that those who are profited by it may do in private what we do in the pulpit. It is thus that the labourers belong to the same Master, and assist one another in the same harvest."

*The Lady of the House.* "Let us in-

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crease our joy by singing a few hymns. Will some one play on the piano, and we will sing in concert; making melody in our hearts?"

One of the ministers approached the instrument; a collection of hymns was distributed, and several of those were sung, which appeared most in harmony with the pious emotions of the company.

The music attracted the children, who had not been present at the Conventicle, as it would have required greater attention than could be expected from their years. The Genevese Minister entered into conversation with two little girls, about the age of ten or twelve, who were modestly seated in a corner of the drawing-room, and spoke to them in the following words:—

*Gen. Min.* "You have not heard, dear children, what I said of the love of our gracious Saviour towards us; it would have required too great attention, although

perhaps you would have been glad to listen to my discourse."

*Eldest.* "Mamma has promised, sir, to tell us, this evening, all that you said."

*Min.* "Your good mamma, then, is in the habit of speaking to you of our Saviour? You are very fortunate in having an opportunity of hearing of Him; but much more so if you love Him, as I trust is the case."

*Eldest.* "At least, sir, we endeavour to do so; but we are only children."

*Min.* "Dear children, a child's heart is as susceptible of God's love as that of a grown-up person."

*Youngest.* "But, sir, we know so little."

*Min.* "Do you know, my dear, that you have a Saviour?"

*Youngest.* "Oh yes, sir, I know that well."

*Min.* "And do you believe Him?"

*Youngest.* "I trust I do."

*Min.* "You believe, then, that you are saved?"

*Youngest.* "With regard to that, I do not know; I dare not say so."

*Min.* "And you, my dear, do you believe that you are saved?"

*Eldest.* "No, sir, not yet; because I am not good enough."

*Min.* "Tell me, dear child, if it were possible that I could take the burden of all the sins you ever committed, would it still lie upon you?"

*Eldest.* "Certainly not, sir; you would be answerable for them, and not I."

*Min.* "And if, after I had taken upon me all your sins,—but observe, my dears, that I say all, without excepting a single one,—if God were to punish these sins according to their deserts, who would undergo the punishment?"

*Eldest.* "Undoubtedly you, sir, as you took upon you all my sins."

For my dear child, would you  
be punished for a first and second time,  
or for some sin?"

Eldest. "Indubitably not, sir."

Mother. "You are right; for we cannot be  
punished for only one fault. Would  
you then be pardoned?"

Eldest. "Certainly, sir, since you were  
so good as to suffer in my place."

Mother. "Well, my dear child, think of the  
goodness of the Saviour Jesus, in taking  
upon Him your sins, and in suffering the  
punishment, all the punishment, which  
was due on account of them. He has  
endured, in your place, the curse of  
God, which ought to have fallen on  
you."

Youngest. "That is exactly what mad-  
amocelle tells us."

Mother. "Who is madamocelle?"

Youngest. "She is our governess; she  
always reads the Bible every day."

*Min.* "And do you believe what is contained in the Bible?"

*Youngest.* "Certainly, sir, for it is the Word of God."

*Min.* "Well! have you not read in the Bible, that God has so loved us, that He has laid the burden of all our sins upon His Son, and has put to death, in our room, His only-begotten and well-beloved Son?"

*Eldest.* "Is it not in this passage, sir : 'God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us?'"

*Min.* "You are perfectly correct: it is in the fifth of the Romans. Well! my dears, do you believe God? Do you believe what He says in this passage, that Christ died for you, that is to say, that He has been punished by God in your place?"

*The Children.* "Yes, sir, we believe."

*Min.* "Well, dear children, if you really

believe, you possess faith, and this faith unites you to your Saviour. You may then ask for the Holy Spirit, and He will give it you, to sanctify your heart, to remove all that is bad, and to make you good. You must ask, my dears, for the Holy Spirit."

*Eldest.* "We will do so, sir, if it please God."

*Min.* "And what return will you make your gracious Saviour?"

*Youngest.* "We will love Him with all our heart."

*Min.* "How do you convince your mamma, or your governess, that you love them?"

*Youngest.* "By being obedient, and by doing what they wish."

*Min.* "Act in the same manner, my children, towards God ; be obedient to Him, and do what He requires. You will then *experience* true happiness. Adieu, dear girls : may God grant you His peace!"

The children thanked the minister. The meeting began to disperse, and each individual testified the joy which he experienced.

The three ministers of the *Pays de Vaud* then addressed the minister of Geneva as follows :—

*The First.* “Dear brother, let us converse a little together ; for we must acknowledge that this has been a most agreeable evening.”

*Gen. Min.* “I cannot, my excellent and beloved friends, express the holy joy which is diffused over my soul. I am persuaded that the Lord, our gracious God, has been in the midst of us this evening, and that the *conventicle*,” added he, smiling, “which we have held will be accompanied with a peculiar blessing.”

*The Second.* “Alas ! dear brother, perhaps it will be the lot of him, who now mistakes us, and who, I am persuaded,



without intending it, blames and despises us, to be placed in the same situation as myself. For I must acknowledge, like the Friend in the 'Poor Watchmaker,'\* 'I have now seen and heard them; I desire to see and hear more from them, and to make a public confession of the grief which I feel at having taken up stones to throw at those whom I ought to honour as the children of God.'"

*Gen. Min.* "Have you ever, my good friend, taken up stones to throw at us?"

*The Second.* "Too often, particularly against you. I sincerely regret it. Give me your hand, and forgive your penitent brother."

*Gen. Min.* "Let us embrace each other, and rejoice that compassion has been shewn to us both; for I also, dear brother, was found by the Lord on the road to Damascus."

\* A Tract by M. Malan.

*The Third.* "Is it possible! You too! Pray when?"

*Gen. Min.* "Not many years ago I also despised and calumniated the conventicles of a few persecuted believers in my country. I would have looked upon it as a disgrace, as a mark of weakness, to have associated with them; and now they are my most delightful companions."

*The First.* "How were you brought to the knowledge of the truth?"

*Gen. Min.* "Different ministers, and particularly two brethren from Berlin, one of whom is at present chaplain to the King, and the other Professor in the University of Bonn, began to make a serious impression on my mind. At the same time a pious and learned Doctor from New York who visited Geneva, accompanied by a faithful young minister, made me desirous of hearing about the Saviour. Never shall I forget the last words which the venerable

Doctor addressed to me at parting. With tears in his eyes, he said, 'Adieu, my young friend. You are beginning the fight; it will be tedious: but be of good cheer, strength will be given you. Recollect that he who trusts in the Lord will never be confounded. Be not afraid so long as you follow Jesus: He has overcome the world. Adieu; I shall not see you again till we meet before the judgment-seat. Look forward to that period. Your Master will ask an account of your ministry.'

"How often have I been strengthened and supported by these words! The Lord has rendered them a blessing to my soul."

*The Third.* "Were you at this time fully converted?"

*Gen. Min.* "No; not yet. My views had hitherto been erroneous; I had now, *so far as I recollect*, become orthodox; but *my soul had not yet been awakened*. I had

not yet laid hold of my salvation as it is in our Saviour."

*The Third.* "Who was it that led you to the knowledge of the truth?"

*Gen. Min.* "It was the respectable Robert Haldane of Scotland. This excellent man, profoundly versed in the Holy Scriptures, came to reside some months at Geneva, about the time that the friends of whom I have just spoken passed through. I met him at their lodgings, and I visited him first; for he was a man of retired and unassuming habits, and not forward to make himself known or listened to. You cannot form too high an idea of the mildness and prudent reserve which characterised all his actions, all his words. His countenance was tranquil and serene. His looks bespoke a charity so profound, that it was impossible in his presence to condemn or judge any one. I was young and animated with youthful zeal, almost always impru-

dent and severe. I spoke with acrimony of certain persons opposed to the gospel. 'Leave these persons, my friend,' said my father in the faith; 'they are under the judgment of God, and not under yours; speak only of their errors that you may avoid them, both for your own benefit and for that of others.' How often have I seen him deplore the enmity which was appearing against the Word of God! He said to me, in language similar to that which had been employed by the Reverend Dr Mason of New York, 'If it were necessary to shed our blood to bring back those who rise in opposition to the gospel, we ought to do so. But,' added he, 'it is not the blood of man which is required, but that of God shed upon the Cross.'"

*The First.* "What method did he follow in instructing you and leading you to receive the truth?"

*Gen. Min.* "You know, dear brother,

that it was the Spirit of God which implanted it in my heart; but this is the manner by which my wise counsellor instructed me: he generally waited till I asked a question; and I went to his house for no other purpose than to listen to his answers. Frequently he made me repeat my question, to be certain that he fully understood my meaning. 'What is your view on the subject?' he inquired. I stated to him my opinion. He then desired me to confirm it by Scripture. In this manner he convinced me of ignorance or of weakness; and when he saw me at a stand through want of acquaintance with the Bible, he began to establish the truth in question, by passages so clear, so appropriate, that it was impossible to withhold my conviction. If one of these passages appeared to me inconclusive, or if I attached to it a false meaning, he immediately produced four or five others, which supported or explained

the first, and put the true interpretation beyond a doubt. In all this discussion he used but few words. It was his finger which spoke; for, as his Bible, literally worn by being read again and again, opened here or there, he immediately pointed to the passage; and whilst I read it, he fixed his eyes upon me as if he wished to mark the impression made upon my soul by the sword of the Spirit."

*The Third.* "But was he not what is termed a Separatist?"

*Gen. Min.* "Never did he advance a single opinion that could lead me to suppose so. He justly testified great abhorrence of heresy; but I never observed anything that bespoke ideas which were narrow or peculiar. Besides, we do not meet with any such sentiments in his two works which we possess. The one, an 'Exposition of the Evidences of the Divine Origin of Christianity,'—the other, at which he laboured

at Geneva, a 'Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.' This last work contains an admirable course of the purest theology. We find in it mingled with the fervour of a mind devoted to Jesus, a profound acquaintance with the plan of salvation, accompanied with sound judgment, and the discriminating *tact* of one whose long experience qualified him to detect the subtleties and deceitful workings of the human heart. I strongly recommend you, my brethren, to make this Commentary your serious study. I am persuaded that every minister who will read it as in the presence of God, comparing with the Bible all the quotations which it contains, will be well qualified to unravel and resist the errors of the present day—that religion of words and fine phrases with which so many amuse themselves, and profess to instruct others."

*The Third.* "Yes; this is what vexes me; to see people oppose the gospel, and



the meetings of Christians, as if believers amused themselves with riddles, and assembled to witness a pantomime. And these people, so far from setting an example of greater wisdom, usefulness, and holiness, content themselves with exclaiming, 'Look at these fools, these hypocrites, who meet together at night to read the Bible, and to pray, as if that were a proper time;'—while they themselves spend these same hours, both Sundays and week-days indifferently, in playing at cards, and ridiculing those who are probably at the same moment engaged in prayer for their persecutors. Truly this is vexatious."

*Gen. Min.* "No more of this: Jehovah, who reigns in heaven, and whose name is the Lord of hosts, sees and hears them; and knowing that He supports and preserves these deluded persons, let us restrain *our* censures and indignation. The simple and infallible means of leading them to sub-

stitute the Bible for their cards, is to shew them the happiness, the joy, the peace, and the patience which abound in the hearts and lives of those who love the Bible. Let them contrast, for a moment, the holy and heavenly serenity of believers, with the languor, the secret dissatisfaction and discontent which spring from their vain speculations, and they will soon feel the necessity of exchanging a shadow for a substance, even at the expense of embracing the gospel.

*The Second.* "We have already gained ground. The opposition which we meet with arises from a secret conviction of weakness; this is proved by the insults we experience; our opponents are compelled to employ force.

*Gen. Min.* "Your observation is most just. Besides, thanks to our Master, we are no longer only one or two. In our canton there are now a considerable number of believers, and conventicles increase even

amongst ladies of rank, as at Thessalonica, in the days of St Paul. In your canton, dear friends, there are from twenty to twenty-five young ministers or pastors in favour of the free preaching of the gospel, exclusive of all the older pastors who support the truth, and who are ready, I am sure, to defend it, if necessary. The circumstances of the neighbouring cantons are also similar. The Word of God is respected; meetings for prayer, for reading the Bible, for mutual edification, although held in private houses, or after sunset, in imitation of the disciples at Jerusalem, and of St Paul at Troas, are no longer treated with obloquy and derision. It is true that Eutychus is a sufferer; but why sleep when St Paul preaches, and, above all, at a window!"

*The Third.* "Unquestionably. I trust that our friends will not act in this manner. *One thing is obvious, that we did not sleep this evening.*"

*Gen. Min.* "We find, dear friends, that our attention is always deeply excited when we speak of what immediately concerns ourselves and our own interests; and no interest can be put in competition with that of the soul. Had we this evening analysed some intricate moral question, apart from the principle on which it is founded, and which alone gives it reality, you would very soon have seen the greater part of the meeting fatigued, and paying comparatively little attention. But, on the other hand, converse with an individual of serious habits, on his lost and ruined condition; unfold to him the love of God,—His omnipotence,—the faithfulness of Jesus; prove to him in particular, that his salvation is gratuitous, and that the chief of sinners, so far from being excluded, is invited to approach with boldness, and lay hold of eternal life, through the medium of unfeigned faith; you will at once command

attention,—and, if your discourse is simple and affectionate, you may add to these primary and fundamental truths all their practical results, the whole Christian morality, as it is termed, without being afraid of fatiguing your audience, or of incurring the charge of encroaching upon their time.”

*The First.* “Such are, indeed, the duties which belong to our blessed and glorious ministry. How true is it that this is a good work! What a happiness, what a noble privilege, to act as the ambassadors of Christ, to entreat sinners, both in season and out of season, to be reconciled to God! What office is so distinguished as that of the herald of righteousness? of the messenger of glad tidings? of the comforter of souls oppressed with the load of sin? Truly, my heart glows with gratitude towards God, who has called me to so high a vocation,—who has graciously given me salvation through His Son, and led me to

His cross, whom I formerly called the Saviour, but to whose love, and power, and fidelity, I was a total stranger. I am now His, and my life is consecrated to Jesus ;— may He employ it in His service !”

*Gen. Min.* “Be not impatient, dear brother ; He will give us work. Our harvest is not yet ended ; it is scarcely begun. The days in which we live are days of festivity, but also of labour for the ministers of Christ. The Sun of Righteousness is appearing above the horizon, and is at present illuminating the beautiful mountains of Switzerland ; He carries healing on His wings ; and the nation, which had relapsed into a state of darkness, is about to exult in the plenitude of light. You are aware that this is the expectation of all the faithful churches, both in our own and other nations : yes, I believe that we are on the eve of a period remarkable for the progress of the gospel in the world. I should not

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be at all surprised were a struggle, similar to that which took place three hundred years ago, shortly to ensue between the doctrine of the truth as it is in Christ, and the wisdom of the world.

*The Second.* "Well, may the Lord inspire us with strength and love!"

*Gen. Min.* "Yes, with love; for I am of opinion, that, probably, the great difference between the revival of light in our days, and that which the Lord brought about at the Reformation, is, that a variety of questions, merely of a political and external nature, were then agitated, which have no share in the present awakening. There is now more charity, perhaps more forbearance, more liberality of sentiment. The nature of the universal Church, I mean the communion of saints, is better understood. The object is not to make men Papists or Protestants. What avails it to be iron or copper, if we are not gold? The.



Lord seeks and calls those only who are Christians. For my own part, I openly avow that I belong neither to Paul, nor Apollos, nor Cephas; that I neither hold the tenets of Luther, Fenelon, or Calvin; and when a Catholic, as he calls himself, comes to ask me to change my religion, as frequently happens, the first question I put to him is, 'Are you a Turk?' and when he replies that he is a Catholic, I say to him, 'Beware of changing your religion; but first inquire are you a Christian.' And if this individual comes to Christ, and embraces the free salvation which faith receives from the merits of the Saviour alone, he quietly lays aside a thousand clogs, a thousand childish practises or errors, from which he is very happy to be freed."

*The First.* "Blessed is the man who leads a soul to the knowledge of the truth. His pilgrimage has not been in vain. Will not this soul be his crown during eternity?

Oh, how should we be animated by so glorious a hope !”

*Gen. Min.* “Dear brother, it is agreeable and edifying to listen to you. I esteem myself happy in having met with you this evening. I trust, my friends, the Lord will bless our mutual friendship; and that, since He has chosen us to proclaim His mercy, He will enable us to pray for each other, and to proceed with vigour in this glorious work; that, after having ploughed and sowed together, we may also together bring home the harvest; and, you know, it is written, ‘that he who has sown in tears shall shout for joy, when he returns loaded with sheaves.’”

*The Ministers of the Pays de Vaud.*  
“Amen! The Lord grant that His kingdom may be established in the midst of us.”

Upon this, their conversation terminated. They separated like brethren united in the

closest ties. And, indeed, what union is like that which is cemented by Christian love?

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Such are the particulars of the "Conventicle of Rolle." As this narrative is written from memory, and a considerable time after the meeting took place, possibly all the circumstances may not be recounted with the same accuracy as if they had been noted down on the day they happened. But at that period we were not aware that this explanation would be requisite.

The account, however, is correct.—Those who were present at the two meetings, held on Wednesday and Thursday, will be able to vouch for its fidelity: and God, in defence of whose truth this pamphlet is published, knows that we have concealed nothing. The doctrine is given in nearly the same language in which it was delivered, and the

conversations, both in public and private, attributed to the Genevese minister, are those which really took place.

Such are the facts which I certify, in all sincerity, whilst it is my earnest prayer to the Lord, who, in His own time, will bring to light the secrets of the heart, that He may render these pages useful in leading *those who are serious, and desirous of knowing the truth*, to attend to the definition they give to the term *Conventicle*.

C. MALAN.

*November, 1821.*



